VISITING HOURS

The government pays me
nine thousand dollars a year
to protect the East Wing.
So I haunt it.

Visiting hours are over.
The silent sentry is on duty.
An electric eye patrols the premises.
I'm just here
putting mouth on the place.

Modigliani whispers to Matisse.
Matisse whispers to Picasso.
I kiss the Rose in my pocket
and tip easy through this tomb of thieves.

I'm weighted down with keys,
flashlight, walkie-talkie, a gun.
I'm expected to die, if necessary,
protecting European artwork
that robbed color and movement
from my life.

I'm the ghost in the Capitol.
I did Vietnam.
My head is rigged with land mines,
but I keep cool,
waiting on every other Friday,

kissing the Rose,
catching some trim.

I'm not protecting any more Europeans
with my life.
I'll give this shit in here away
before I die for it.
Fuck a Remb-randt!

And if I ever go off,
you'd better look out, Mona Lisa.
I'll run through this gallery
with a can of red enamel paint
and spray everything in sight
like a cat in heat.